

DETAILED ACTION

Allowable Subject Matter

1. Claims 1-53 are allowed.
2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Claims 1 and 46 recite an apparatus for automatically unloading and loading substrates with a vacuum vessel enclosing a loading and unloading chamber with a transfer port in communication with the chamber with an evacuated region outside the vacuum vessel wherein the loading and unloading chamber is hermetically sealed apart from the transfer port and the transfer port allows transfer of the substrate holder between the chamber and the evacuated region outside the vacuum vessel, a substrate holder in the chamber comprising a substrate support table and a locating means cooperable with the substrate support table for causing a substrate to be pressed against and located on the table, and a release means in the chamber, the release means withholding the cooperation of the locating means with the support table and providing a temporary support of the substrate clear of the table. These limitations, in combination with the other limitations in the claims, were not found in the relevant prior art.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

3. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to RAMYA PRAKASAM whose telephone number is (571)272-6011. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday, 9am - 6pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gene Crawford can be reached on (571)272-6911. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Gene Crawford/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
Unit 3651

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